

null
Diana T Fritz 12/05/2006 11:43:05 AM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable
Text:

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 00301

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: DCM AMB P/M USLO ECON DAO

DISSEMINATION: POLM
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MJSISON
DRAFTED: POL:JMAYBURY
CLEARED: A/DCM:OJOHN, P/M SYORK, CG:JDAVIS, ICE:WWALLRAPP, BIS:MO'BRI

VZCZCADI913
OO RHEHNSC RUEHC RUEHDE
DE RUEHAD #0301/01 0181117
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 181117Z JAN 05
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7786
INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 4747

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 ABU DHABI 000301

SIPDIS

NOFORN

NSC FOR HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISOR FRAN TOWNSEND FROM
AMBASSADOR
DEPT FOR EB A/S TONY WAYNE AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [EFIN](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER - NSC HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISOR
TOWNSEND'S VISIT TO UAE

(U) Classified by Ambassador Michele J. Sison, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Overview: We look forward to welcoming you to the United Arab Emirates February 6-7. U.S.-UAE cooperation in the security and counterterrorism fields is robust and the UAE leadership is actively seeking ways to enhance the relationship. Your visit here will be an excellent opportunity to thank the Emiratis for the outstanding cooperation they have provided on numerous CT issues. It will also be an occasion to encourage them to continue CT cooperation with their neighbors, improve internal coordination shortcomings, share more leads with us, and sign an MLAT. In Abu Dhabi, we have requested meetings with Crown Prince General Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ), State Security Department Director Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Central Bank Governor Sultan Nasser Al Suweidi. In Dubai, we have requested a meeting with Dubai Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (MBR). (We will suggest that Interior Minister Sheikh Saif sit in on his brother MBZ's session, and that SSD Dubai and the Minister of State for Finance sit in with MBR.)

12. (S) In response to terrorist threats, the UAE is implementing numerous measures in hopes of preventing attacks that could cripple its economy and destroy the Emirates, image as a peaceful, profitable place to do business. UAE law enforcement agencies -- with U.S. assistance and training -- are also focusing on how they would respond to a potential attack, including attacks on critical oil production, power and water infrastructure, and ports/airports. The UAE armed forces have made

counterterrorism a leading concern. UAEG funding for security, including defense, soaked up a whopping 43 percent of federal budgeted expenditures in 2004.

¶3. (S/NF) By many accounts, the Emiratis may be better prepared to prevent, and to cope, with a terrorist assault than other Gulf neighbors, but the jury is still out on whether they could capably defend against a sustained campaign of terrorist violence on their soil. There is relatively little coordination within and between the emirates on counter-terrorism strategies. Only in July 2004 did the government pass a new anti-terrorism law that provides UAE agencies a framework and broad powers for future operations. There is also still an atmosphere of complacency that may emanate from the fact that the UAE has, thankfully, not yet been "hit."

¶4. (U) We have identified 13 issues for you to explore; they appear in paragraphs 5 - 17, below.

Suggested Issues

¶5. (S/NF) REGIONAL COOPERATION.

Background: The arrest of an Al Qaida-affiliated terrorist cell in Buraimi in 2004 was an excellent example of CT cooperation between the UAE and Oman. The UAE State Security Division and its Omani counterpart developed information and jointly investigated the case of a terror cell that allegedly planned to attack oil infrastructure in the Gulf. However, CT cooperation with other Gulf neighbors has lapsed.

The UAE is focusing significant resources on controlling its porous land and maritime borders. Your UAE interlocutors are worried about terrorism in Saudi Arabia and potential spillover. UAE-Saudi cooperation has been problematic. UAE officials have told us that when they try to cooperate with the Saudis by giving them information about suspects in the Kingdom, the Saudis either reject the offer of cooperation, saying it is &Saudi business, or take so long to act on the information that it becomes fruitless. Likewise, we have some evidence that UAE-Kuwaiti CT cooperation is weak.

Points to make: Encourage more regional cooperation; cite Buraimi cell example.

Expected UAE points: Difficulty getting cooperation from Gulf neighbors due to political sensitivities.

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, Hazza

¶6. (S/NF) UAEG INTERNAL CT COORDINATION

Background: There is relatively little coordination between Abu Dhabi and Dubai on CT strategies. The primary federal decision-makers on matters related to CT are MBZ, Sheikh Hazza, and Interior Minister Sheikh Saif. The Central Bank takes decisions on freezing accounts, while transshipment issues, which primarily involve Dubai, are handled autonomously through the Dubai State Security Division. When the other five emirates have issues related to transshipment or CT, they refer the matter to federal authorities (Abu Dhabi) for guidance. (We point to the example of Sharjah emirate,s handling of Osman Saeed, which landed on Interior Minister Sheikh Saif,s desk.) The AQ Khan network dossier has been worked at both the Abu Dhabi and Dubai level.

In August 2004, the UAEG adopted a new anti-terrorism law that gives UAE officials greater authority to respond to terrorist-related activity. The legislation defines terrorism, lists the persons and organizations affected by this new law, specifically criminalizes terrorist financing, and sets stiff penalties for violations. The law also establishes an anti-terrorism committee.

Points to make: Underscore the need for the UAE to improve interagency and inter-emirate coordination in the CT arena;

equally important that the U.S. continue to explore avenues of cooperation to assist them.

Expected UAE points: Committee being set up under National Anti-Terror Law to improve coordination. USG needs to do a better job of passing on information that is usable for prosecution purposes. UAEG Central Bank has legal constraints on asset freezing.

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, Hazza, Al Suweidi, MBR

17. (S/NF) CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE THREAT.

Background: UAE officials have said that they have taken measures to enhance security at oil installations, but acknowledge that significant critical infrastructure vulnerabilities remain and extend beyond oil infrastructure to power and water grids, ports and airports. Attacks on the UAE's power and desalination plants, which produce nearly all the UAE's potable water, could have a far greater and more immediate impact on UAE, senior UAE officials have told us. Raytheon Corp. is working with the Coast Guard and oil companies to develop security systems for onshore and offshore oil installations.

Points to make: Interested in progress on UAE's assessment of its critical infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Expected UAE points: Appreciate U.S. cooperation (DHS/ICE ran a December 2004 Security Threat Assessment Training).

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, Hazza, MBR

18. (S/NF) GREATER UAEG CT ACTIVISM.

Background: While the USG has urged the UAE to provide us with leads to pursue in CT cases, the UAE has been hesitant to do so unless they are absolutely certain that the information is accurate. For example, we believe Sheikh Hazza wants to be 100 percent certain about the information he shares with us to avoid being seen in a negative light.

Points to make: Urge UAE intelligence services to be more proactive and give us leads.

Expected UAE points: Urge the USG to provide it with actionable information.

Suggested interlocutor(s): Hazza

19. (S/NF) TERRORISM FINANCING.

Background: The UAE is seized with the terrorism financing issue. Progress on terror finance cases requires information that is specific, actionable, and releasable to the UAEG. Salah Al Shamsi remains in UAE detention. In a separate case, Dubai authorities have moved unilaterally against a Dubai-based Iraqi insurgent support network. DHS/ICE is also working a joint investigation with MoI targeting a Dubai based company allegedly involved in acquiring weapons for the previous Iraqi regime and financing insurgency operations in Iraq. If the Ahmed Al Kubaysi or Human Appeal International cases are to be raised, our side must come armed with specific, actionable, and releasable information.

Points to make: Appreciate UAE cooperation on Al Shamsi case; looking forward to further cooperation. What is being done regarding Iraqi insurgent fundraising connections? Propose enhanced information exchange, joint terrorist finance working group or task force. Highlight DOJ training possibilities on prosecuting terror finance, bringing prosecutors, judges, and bankers together.

Expected UAE points: U.S. can count on cooperation; ask U.S for specific actionable information.

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, MBR

¶10. (C/NF) MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA/FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (MENA/FATF).

Background: The Central Bank Governor has stressed that the UAEG will play a fully supportive role in the MENA/FATF process, but has stated that the UAEG would like to be considered for FATF membership in its own right. We assess that the UAE will participate in MENA/FATF fully and constructively, despite not being the host of the organization.

Points to make: The new MENA/FATF will help to address structural anti-money laundering counter-terrorist financing issues in the region. Important to participate fully and actively.

Expected UAE points: UAEG will be fully supportive of MENA/FATF. Important that the organization be technical and not political. May ask about possibility of Iranian and Syrian participation and UAE interest in FATF membership

Suggested interlocutor(s): Al Suweidi

¶11. (C/NF) CASH COURIERS.

Background: UAE regulates both the import of cash and inbound/outbound wire transfers. Individuals are required to declare cash that they import to the UAE in amounts greater than the equivalent of \$10,800. Legislation specifically requires cash to be declared when it is brought into the UAE.

The Central Bank recently held a training session on cash declarations for the emirate level customs services and is addressing the problem of cash couriers. The UAE is seeing large sums of cash coming from India and Pakistan.

Points to make: Would welcome UAE taking same leadership role in cash couriers that it has taken in Hawala (informal funds transfer networks). Increasingly important way for terrorists to move funds. Will UAE specifically add a cash reporting requirement for cash exports?

Expected UAE points: Central Bank is working with UAE customs, but tracking this is a customs lead. Hosted training for customs. Would be area for customs training.

Suggested interlocutor(s): Al Suweidi

¶12. (S/NF) CHARITIES.

Background: The UAE Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs monitors registered charities in the country and requires them to keep records of donations and beneficiaries. In 2002, the UAEG mandated that all licensed charities transfer funds abroad via one of three umbrella organizations: the Red Crescent Authority, the Zayed Charitable Foundation, or the Mohammed bin Rashid Charitable Trust. The purpose of this regulation was to make the process of sending charitable contributions to foreign countries more transparent and to prevent financing of extremist groups. The Foreign Ministry has contacted the governments in numerous aid-receiving countries to compile a list of recognized, acceptable recipients for UAE charitable assistance.

There are reports of UAE money going to charities linked to Hamas. (Note: UAE contributions to the Palestinians are to be funneled through the Red Crescent Society, which is overseen by MinState for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan. RCS funds for assistance go directly to projects and are not provided in cash.)

Points to make: Important to work together to ensure that charities are not misused. Give examples of how the Saudis are working to control charities. Solicit UAE leadership in the efforts to control charities.

Expected UAE points: Understand the need to control flow of funds from charities. If USG has information to indicate problems with UAE charities, please provide it.

Suggested interlocutors: MBZ, MBR, Al Suweidi

13. (S/NF) EXPORT CONTROLS/CSI

Background: The UAE recognizes the need to stop the proliferation of WMD and related materials and welcomes USG assistance. Although the UAE is not a source of WMD, its ports have been used to transship WMD related material to states with burgeoning WMD programs. On December 13, 2004 Commissioner Bonner from U.S. Customs and Border Protection signed the Container Security Initiative with the Port of Dubai. CSI should be operational in February 2005 at Port Rashid.

The UAE,s draft export control law is still in the UAE interagency process.

In the past year, the U.S. sponsored:

-- Seaport Interdiction Training Program.

-- A Control List workshop targeted at legal and licensing experts.

-- A WMD components identification course for federal and emirate-level customs and law enforcement officials.

-- Legal and regulatory fora for UAE legal and regulatory experts from the Ministries of Interior, Justice, and Foreign Affairs, the Federal Customs Authority, and emirate-level officials.

We are encouraged by the UAE,s continuing cooperation in individual cases (e.g., their quick action in the Osman Saeed case involving diversion of controlled missile technology items through the UAE to Pakistan,s missile program). The UAE intends to prosecute Saeed under the National Anti-Terrorism Law, which prohibits the import of WMD-related components into the UAE.

Points to make: CSI good initiative; export control law and national control list will help UAE to exercise control over proliferation-related goods that enter the UAE and take unilateral action to halt such trade.

Expected UAE points: Nonproliferation is a priority; appreciate U.S. assistance; draft law in pipeline.

Suggested interlocutors: MBZ, MBR

15. (S/NF) TRAINING.

Background: The UAE has welcomed training opportunities. In December 2004 DHS/ICE completed Security Threat Assessment training with the Ministry of Interior on how to assess security threats, particularly those posed by terrorist organizations, for critical infrastructure sites and to employ appropriate countermeasures. Sheikh Saif, Minister of Interior, was pleased with the training and has created a dedicated unit comprised of course graduates that will be handling all future security/threat assessments for the Ministry. UAE police have participated in Department of State-sponsored Anti-Terrorism Assistance training courses.

Points to make: Highlight the new DOJ/OPDAT Resident Legal Advisor position at Embassy Abu Dhabi (RLA arrived 1/05); seek input on training needs.

Expected UAE points: Desire to explore more training.

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, Hazza, MBR

16. (SBU) MLAT.

Background: U.S. and UAE teams will resume MLAT negotiations in Washington February 22-24. (We intend to send our DOJ OPDAT back for the session.) The UAE side will also raise

their concern on extradition issues during the MLAT talks. An extradition treaty poses problems for the USG because the UAE Constitution prevents extradition of UAE nationals. USG policy is not to sign extradition treaties with countries that do not extradite their own nationals. The U.S. is concerned with a recent increase in formal refusals to render fugitives to the U.S. The UAEG has cooperated with the USG in the past on rendering fugitives, and now it has changed its policy (probably to gain negotiating leverage in the MLAT negotiations). Within our legally available means, the USG has always been helpful to the UAEG in fugitive cases, and would ask that the UAE show us the same courtesy and return our fugitives to the U.S.

Points to make: Need for our negotiating teams to sit down with each other to understand what can, and cannot be achieved.

Expected UAE points: Link MLAT with extradition treaty.

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, Hazza, Al Suweidi, MBR

17. (S/NF) DHS/ICE, VISAS.

Background: DHS/ICE opened offices at Embassy Abu Dhabi and ConGen Dubai in 2004. DHS/ICE has focused on transshipment and money laundering investigations but is also conducting joint cases with UAE counterparts involving organized crime, fraud, and child pornography. ICE has developed a close working relationship with the Ministry of Interior, particularly on the Saeed investigation where ICE agents were permitted to accompany MoI personnel during the searches of several businesses resulting in the recovery of inertial navigation equipment with missile guidance applications. Most recently MoI has approved a joint undercover operation with ICE targeting Hawala dealers operating illegally in the United States and the UAE. This operation is expected to commence in February 2005.

On the visa front, our Consular and Public Diplomacy staff work hard to explain the complexities of our visa regulations and correct Emiratis, sometimes negative perceptions on U.S. visa and homeland security policies.

Points to make: Thank MBZ for the close cooperation that ICE has received from the Abu Dhabi Police Department and the MoI on joint investigations.

Expected UAE points: Interest in continued training.

Suggested interlocutor(s): MBZ, MBR

SISON
SISON